

WSATC, Remarks by Mary Pat Frederick Former Deputy Director, L& I October 15, 1998

Madam chair, council members, L&I apprenticeship staff and guests: On behalf of Director Gary Moore, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the October meeting of the Washington State Apprenticeship and Training Council. Thank you all for being here.

As I prepared to talk with you today, I reflected on apprenticeship's long tradition - a tradition of learning by doing, under the watchful eye and guidance of a master craftsman; a tradition that spans centuries, continents and cultures.

And I thought who am I to tell you - apprenticeship's staunch supporters - the value of this enduring training model? What can I say that you don't already know?

First, I can help you recall why you care. In the 1996 biennial evaluation of training programs conducted by the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board:

93 percent of all apprenticeship participants were still employed nine months after completing training - the highest employment rate of all training programs.

Of the 93 percent, 81 percent have health insurance and 71 percent have pension benefits. Sixty percent are in union jobs.

The post-apprenticeship median hourly wage is \$17.68, a wage that supports a family of four at twice the poverty level.

The apprenticeship training system has the highest economic outcomes of any workforce training program in Washington State.

Apprenticeship is competency based. And it succeeds. The results are highly skilled workers who make a livable wage and meet the needs of Washington industry.

Apprenticeship works for employers. If it didn't, employers wouldn't invest \$331 for every one dollar government spends on apprenticeship training.

To all of you who contribute your energy to Washington's apprenticeship system, thank you.

Today, I can also share with you some thoughts from Governor Gary Locke and Director Gary Moore about the future of apprenticeship in our state.

In a speech to the Construction Trades Council in August, Governor Locke called apprenticeship "the world's best model for adult training and education." He said

apprenticeship will play an increasingly important role as we work to create a high-skill, high-wage economy in every community in Washington.

He talked about the value employers place on problem-solving, teamwork and critical thinking skills and applauded apprenticeship for combining those generic skills with specific training in a trade or occupation.

The Governor called apprenticeship programs the wave of the future.

At the Apprenticeship Summit in Seattle last January, L&I Director Gary Moore said a changing world requires flexibility and adaptability from institutions as well as people. He said we need to expand apprenticeship training to more occupations.

He also said no one part of the apprenticeship community can sustain apprenticeship's values and expand its potential. Apprenticeship needs the combined talents and resources of business, labor, education, community organizations and government.

Working together, we can preserve the integrity of apprenticeship and expand opportunities to new occupational fields. Just as apprenticeship trained today's highly skilled carpenters, electricians and plumbers, apprenticeship can produce tomorrow's highly skilled lab technicians, insurance underwriters and computer technicians.

The third area I want to discuss is Labor and Industries' role in sustaining Washington's apprenticeship system. The department works with the council to implement the direction envisioned by the governor and the director. From the central office we provide staff support to the council, maintain records and generate statistics on apprenticeship programs and participation, issue certificates of completion, monitor accident reports on apprentices and pay industrial insurance premiums for the classroom portion of apprentices' training.

In L&I regional offices, apprenticeship coordinators work with local organizations to develop new apprenticeship programs for the council's approval. For example, here in Region 5, which serves the dispersed communities of central Washington, apprenticeship coordinator Marcia Brown is working with the Okanogan Electrical Cooperative to develop a meter technician apprenticeship program.

In Region 2, which serves densely populated King County, apprenticeship coordinator Anne Wetmore is working on a joint apprenticeship training committee for dispensing opticians.

At the state level, we're laying the groundwork for public sector participation in apprenticeship, and all of L&I's regional apprenticeship coordinators will contribute to this effort. In fact, the council chair, Melinda Nichols, has encouraged L&I to conduct a conference next year to introduce public sector leaders and managers to the apprenticeship training model.

Of course, we also investigate complaints and conduct compliance reviews to make certain apprenticeship programs follow their standards and meet affirmative action requirements.

L&I carries out these responsibilities for more than 300 apprenticeship programs and 12,542 registered apprentices.

With a staff of 12 - seven coordinator positions in the field and a program manager, apprenticeship coordinator and three support positions in the central office.

Not surprisingly, L&I's proposed biennial budget for 1999-2001 requests additional funds for L&I's apprenticeship program. The request would fund three new apprenticeship coordinators in areas expected to have continued high growth - two in the Puget Sound area and one in Vancouver - plus an office assistant in Tumwater. Other requested funds would cover increases in workers' compensation premiums that come with a growing number of apprentices.

L&I's executive management believes the department's proposed budget is both frugal and well thought-out. And we believe additional funding for L&I's apprenticeship program is crucial to the future of apprenticeship in our state.

We believe this because we required each L&I program to establish goals, strategies and performance measures as part of our strategic planning process. This information lets our customers know what we will do, how we will do it and how we will measure success. We reviewed this information with our programs managers and asked them a lot of tough questions.

The three goals of the Apprenticeship Program for the next five years are:

Increase participation in apprenticeship programs and increase overall completion rate.

Continue to build greater female and minority participation in apprenticeship programs.

Create additional apprenticeship programs by focusing on the high tech, health care and public sectors.

The strategies for achieving these goals are varied:

We must remove any barriers in the apprenticeship system that keep women and minority individuals from entering and completing apprenticeship training. The ultimate goal is a journey-level workforce that represents the communities in which we work and live.

We will continue our efforts to ensure that apprenticeship programs operate according to their standards. We cannot sacrifice quality as the apprenticeship system expands. High standards of operation will apply to new programs as well as current programs.

We will continue to refine our ability to generate and share useable statistical data about the state's apprenticeship system.

And we will plan and execute a public education campaign about apprenticeship training.

In the budget development process, L&I's executive management turned away many more requests for additional funds than we submitted in our budget proposal. The fact that additional funding for the Apprenticeship Program remained speaks volumes:

On the caliber of work performed by L&I apprenticeship staff.

On Labor and Industries' support for the state's apprenticeship system.

On the strategic direction open to apprenticeship in this state.

Together, we can take apprenticeship boldly into the next century - the council, Labor and Industries and all of you who care so passionately.

*We regret to report that Mary Pat Frederick died Sept. 6, 1999, after a long battle with cancer. The spirit of her remarks lives on, as does her message here.